

# ETOWAH COUNTY

## Honorable C. Wayne Owen

Etowah County Courthouse  
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## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Etowah County professionals will expand collaborative efforts regarding children's mental and physical health.
2. Children in Etowah County will have more opportunities for success in school.
3. Children in Etowah County will have access to quality childcare.

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## **Health - Children's (0 - 19)** physical and mental well-being in the county.

### **Families in Etowah County will be both physically and mentally healthy**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Increase public awareness and referral sources to existing parenting programs (i.e. Parent Project, STEP parent support group).
- Increase children's enrollment in health coverage (Medicaid/All Kids) by providing information and application assistance to parents during the 2005-2006 school year.

### **Etowah County professionals will expand collaborative efforts regarding children's mental and physical health**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Increase public awareness of existing agencies in Etowah County through health fairs during the 2005-2006 school year
- Provide training opportunities for professionals and individuals concerning eligibility criteria to obtain local resources

## **Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.**

### **Adolescents in Etowah County will have the availability to be paired with a mentor**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Research and collaborate with all mentoring programs in Etowah County to find the gaps in service and ways to fill them
- Meet with the school boards of education to find out what their needs, guidelines, and limitations are to hosting mentors in their school systems.
- Design and present a public speaking program to go into the community to promote mentoring programming

### **Parents in Etowah County will be educated on child abuse, neglect, juvenile crime, and substance use/abuse**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Find an instructionally based program to educate parents on what to look for in their children (i.e. gang affiliation, substance use/abuse, depression) and to train volunteers in this programming
- Arrange to bring the parent educational programming to civic, church, and community groups during the 2005-2006 school year
- Develop an evaluation and measurement plan to quantify results

## **Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.**

### **Children in Etowah County will have more opportunities for success in school**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Recognize the most improved students in every school within Etowah County for the 2005-2006 school year
- Develop and promote a countywide science fair for middle school students to be held in the spring of 2006

### **Children in Etowah County will have enhanced social well being through interagency efforts**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist in the expansion of existing programs to increase the number of children reached during the 2005-2006 school year
- Promote community awareness of after-school, enrichment, and summer school programs from July 1, 2005 until June 30, 2006

## Early Care and

### Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### Children in Etowah County will have access to quality childcare

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Educate parents and community on the needs to apply for childcare subsidies
- Ask Head Start Director to speak to our Children's Policy Council and distribute information
- Ask Children's Resource Network to speak to our Children's Policy Council on quality childcare in Etowah County
- Provide education/information to the Children's Policy council on a quality rating system for childcare in Etowah County
- Support local childcare centers by offering the "Going to School" Curriculum to local childcare centers and Childcare Central

### Children in Etowah County will have the skills necessary to succeed in school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Create a phone number resource guide for families
- Find funding for printing the phone number resource guide
- Distribute the phone number resource guide to organizations that come into contact with children birth to 5 years old.
- Locate contact information for resources for families
- Create the resource contact guide brochure
- Distribute the resource contact guide to the community

- Supply school readiness skills sheets to faith-based organizations and childcare centers

## Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

### School aged youth in Etowah County will be informed of and have access to community services

Policy Council Action Steps:

- This committee will coordinate with the Safety Committee of the CPC to assess the current mentoring programs targeting at-risk youth with the goal of replacing unhealthy peer attachments with positive and responsible adult presence
- The community will be informed of available avenues for education completion through the introduction of Public Service Announcements during the 2005-2006 school year.

### Children in Etowah County will be financially supported by their families

Policy Council Action Steps:

- This committee, in collaboration with community agencies, churches, and relative organizations, will plan and implement "Dollars and Sense" financial planning classes
- Community services will collaborate to require client enrollment in "Dollars and Sense" financial planning program after receiving financial assistance for the first time, before financial assistance can be received a second time

## Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

### Children in Etowah County will be safe from abuse and violence

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Collaboration of existing programs to enhance service delivery to children and families in Etowah County during the 2005-2006 school year through the formation of a prevention services committee which will meet on a quarterly basis
- Collaboration with other committees within the Children's Policy Council to hold area health and safety fairs over the next twelve months

### Parents in Etowah County will be offered early intervention and other resources to improve family functioning

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Establish community and professional education events to be held over the next eighteen months
- Collaborate with prevention services committee to establish Public Service Announcements regarding parenting resources within Etowah County.

## Policy Recommendation

1. Mandate a Social Worker to be placed in every school to expand mental health resources to students and their families.
2. Provide funding through the state for a Community Coordinator to increase public awareness, promote collaborative efforts within the community, and help to secure funding for community based service efforts.
3. Increase funding to promote educational success through after-school, day-treatment, enrichment, and summer school programs that enhance learning opportunities and social skills.
4. Mandate Nurses to be in every school to improve student health and promote success in school.
5. Increase funding for childcare subsidies.
6. Implement a quality rating system for childcare centers.
7. Mandate a 5 year kindergarten.
8. Increase funding for training to social service agencies and family services.
9. Require enforcement of parent accountability laws.
10. Interagency collaboration between government departments to support efforts in implementing mentoring/tutoring programs and financial planning programs within the community.

## Accomplishments

1. Received \$2,000 grant from Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy that purchased program materials to go into 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.
2. Held Levels Capacity Training in collaboration with Cherokee County.
3. Published a brochure and membership manual.
4. Received a full-time VISTA volunteer and a 10 week Summer VISTA volunteer.